

nosis, 4th edition, weighs in at 1058 pages, 7.3 pounds, and \$31.00 per pound. By contrast, Cavaye and White's volume is 151 pages, 2.0 pounds, and \$70.00 per pound. In terms of lasting contributions to the vascular surgeon's library and clinical practice, buy them by the pound.

John Thomas Mehigan, MD
Stanford University Medical Center
Stanford, Calif.

The ABCs of antihypertensive therapy

Franz H. Messerli, New York, 1994, Raven Press, 288 pages, \$49.

Hypertension is one of the most common, although underemphasized, comorbid conditions afflicting patients cared for by the vascular specialist. The benefits of chronic blood pressure control are well established, but, like many chronic conditions, hypertension is often tolerated by physicians caring for more overt vascular diseases. As specialists, our reluctance to intervene may be due in part to the vast and confusing pharmacopeia currently marketed for hypertension. Few diseases can be treated in so many ways with seemingly equivalent effect. The editor of this text has taken on the admirable task of presenting us with a succinct, "rational," and mechanistic approach to antihypertensive therapy.

This is a paperback of pocket width that carries a title implying a "nuts-and-bolts" handbook to be applied directly to real patient problems. The editor and contributing authors are a prominent multinational group of senior experts (most have full professorships) in the field of hypertension. Chapters are organized logically, beginning with a historical perspective and review of the hemodynamic and neurohumoral underpinnings of hypertension, which is followed by four parts focusing individually on target organs, on the major classes of antihypertensive drugs, on "Rational Antihypertensive Therapy," which attempts to merge parts I and II into management strategies, and finally on "Special Clinical Situations." Twenty-three chapters average 10 narrow pages each, including figures and references, with a single text column. Individual chapters are well written and current and succeed in conveying salient points within limited page space. Tables and figures were left a comfortable size for the reader, and references are up-to-date but overdone in some chapters.

Although authors present their individual topics admirably, the information tends not to come together as a package that can be easily applied to specific patients. Drug recommendations are general throughout the text, and there is moderate subject overlap, which is distracting in a brief text. For instance, the failing kidney and heart are covered as organ systems, then within individual drug categories, and again in the section on "special considerations." An obvious omission occurs in the area of renovascular hypertension. Although uncommon, this is not a rare condition, and advances in noninvasive imaging have increased the frequency of timely intervention in

well-selected patients. Also, the odd dimensions of the book itself (its height is more than twice its thin width) and narrow margins make it somewhat awkward to handle.

In summary, this text provides a brief and well-written reference pertaining to hypertension and its medical management. At \$49 it is a great value for those who seek a succinct review of the subject. As a "how-to" handbook, to guide antihypertensive therapy for a specific patient, the book may have missed the mark.

Randolph L. Geary, MD
Bowman Gray School of Medicine
Winston-Salem, N.C.

Handbook of vascular surgery

Clifford M. Sales, Jamie Goldsmith, Frank J. Veith, St. Louis, 1994, Quality Medical Publishing, Inc., 370 pages, \$28.

The "*Handbook of Vascular Surgery*" is a pocket-size paperback containing 350 pages, with 95 illustrations. It was edited by Clifford M. Sales, Jamie Goldsmith, and Frank J. Veith from Overlook Hospital in New Jersey and Montefiore Medical Center in New York. The text is readable and large, with high-quality print. The diagrams and tables are well reproduced, but the reproductions of angiograms are poor. The handbook follows the style used in major textbooks of vascular surgery. It includes 16 chapters, with 22 contributing authors. Chapters are short, each with a different style and format, with some repetition of topics. Although some chapters, such as those covering upper extremities and dialysis grafts, are well organized, others such as those covering aorta and venous disease cover a wide variety of topics, but only in a very superficial manner. Parts of the handbook appear to be directed at senior residents, whereas others are for nurses and medical students.

The stated intent of the handbook is to provide a basic source of information for nurses, residents, and allied health professionals, as well as to provide diagnostic points and treatment plans for practicing physicians—too ambitious a task for such a small book. The handbook contains good overviews of atherosclerotic and nonatherosclerotic vascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, and medical evaluation of a patient with vascular disease. The description of physical examination of the patient with vascular disease, however, is too brief, and there is limited information on coagulation, thrombolysis, or venous insufficiency. The handbook also attempts to "provide a foundation of information that can stimulate further exploration of the topic in the referenced literature," but most chapters could use a more detailed reference list. The handbook is indexed sufficiently to function as a quick reference, and the appendix provides many useful anatomic diagrams of arterial and vascular structures. Although the authors specifically state this is not an operative atlas, they proceed to provide detailed anatomy and techniques for a variety of amputations, as well as operations on the thoracic outlet.